

Serial No. 09/458,077

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. Entry of this Amendment under Rule 116 is merited as it raises no new issues and requires no further search.

Counsel thanks Supervisory Patent Examiner J. Weiss and Examiner M. Kidwell for the courtesy of an interview held on February 27, 2002.

At the Interview, the Examiners indicated that independent claim 6 is allowable over the art applied in the November 29, 2001 Final Office Action, and the finality of the November 29, 2001 Office Action will be withdrawn.

Applicants by this paper have introduced further amendments to claims 10-11, 16 and 20 to overcome the indefiniteness rejection manifested in page 2 of the November 29, 2001 Office Action. Claim 17 has been also amended to improve the claim language. No new matter has been introduced through these amendments.

All claims i.e. independent claim 6 and 7-23 depending therefrom are clearly patentable over the applied art of record. Early and favorable indication of allowance is courteously solicited.

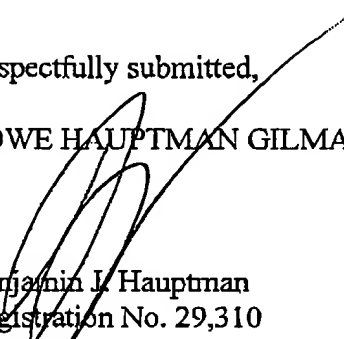
Of particular note, Examiner Kidwell's "obvious matter of engineering choice" contention as to claims 9-10, 16-17 and 20-21 is traversed since the features recited in claims 9-10, 16-17 and 20-21 are not obvious choices. Should Examiner Kidwell insists otherwise, Applicants respectfully request that citation(s) of a reference or references which might support the Examiner's contention be supplied. The Examiner's attention is also directed to page 13, the last 7 lines and page 9, lines 14-17 of the specification where criticality of, at least, claims 9 and 10 is discussed, respectively.

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The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 10, 11, 16, 17 and 20 as follows:

10. (Amended) The article of claim 6, wherein said core further contains super-absorptive polymer particles distributed [substantially] only in the central region.

11. (Amended) The article of claim 6, wherein said core comprises a plurality of indentations arranged along each of said lines, each indentation having side walls extending from an opening formed on the upper surface toward the lower surface and ending at a bottom, thereby [portions of said core sandwiched between the bottom and the lower surface] defining the indented regions.

16. (Amended) The article of claim 15, wherein the grooves intersect in [the] a vicinity of the longitudinally middle point of said lines.

17. (Amended) The article of claim 14, wherein [each] a depth of at least one of the grooves gradually decreases from the longitudinally middle point of the respective line toward the longitudinally opposite ends thereof.

20. (Amended) The article of claim 6, wherein said lines intersect in [the] a vicinity of the longitudinally middle point thereof.